

amongst his Senate colleagues. He served a stint running the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

By 1987, he had risen to become chairman of the Senate Rules Committee. That position put him in charge of the inaugural ceremonies at the Capitol for both Presidents George H.W. Bush in 1989 and Bill Clinton in 1993. Kentuckians were proud to see one of their own on the inaugural platform just footsteps away from the new President.

Wendell was chairman of the Joint Committee on Printing where he worked to trim the costs of Government printing and implemented the first ever program for the use of recycled printing paper. That may not be the type of issue that grabs the biggest headlines, but, obviously, official Washington uses a lot of paper. Wendell was ahead of his time in making these environmentally friendly efforts that are commonplace now, and he saved taxpayers millions of dollars.

Wendell could see the absurdity of some of what goes on in Washington and knew just when to break the tension with a little humor. One former colleague has spoken of one of the many times the Senate has continued in session until 3:30 or 4 o'clock in the morning, with debate still going on on the Senate floor. At one of these times, Wendell nudged the Senator next to him and said: You know, the people back home think that we are the ones who won.

Wendell even appeared once on the cable channel MTV on a program called "Rock the Vote" because of his sponsorship of the motor voter law. That MTV appearance made him very popular with his grandchildren. Surely the number of U.S. Senators who have appeared sandwiched in between videos for Whitney Houston and Billy Ray Cyrus is very small.

In 1990, Wendell's colleagues, as my friend the majority leader pointed out, elected him to be No. 2 in their party in the Senate, the Senate whip. He held that slot until his retirement in 1999. Wendell was elected by acclamation and without opposition. That is obviously a position of great responsibility and honor, and it speaks to the respect Wendell commanded from his fellow Senators.

After his election as whip, he said: In Kentucky, we are known for our horses. I plan on being a workhorse and not a show horse.

I think knowing Wendell's work ethic, no one doubted he would give his all to the job.

In March of 1998, Wendell became the longest serving Senator in Kentucky history, breaking the record of the man he had seen giving a speech more than 50 years earlier, Alben Barkley. That is just another accomplishment in a long list that he has amassed over his extraordinarily successful tenure in both State and Federal Government.

Wendell Ford served in this body for 8,772 days, a record that stood for near-

ly 11 years until January 10, this past Saturday. He never lost an election for public office. Kentucky sent him to the U.S. Senate four times, and he was the first statewide candidate to carry all 120 counties.

How does a country boy from Yellow Creek achieve such success at the highest levels of American politics? I think because no matter where he ended up, Wendell Ford never forgot from where he started from. Even in his final months in the Senate, he still got goose bumps every time he looked up at the Capitol dome on his way to work. He remained the same man, partial to a cigarette and a down-home tale.

When his duties didn't require him to be in Washington, he would return home to Kentucky, as he did most weekends throughout his Senate career. A 3-day weekend was a perfect chance to go to the house he and his family owned by Rough River Lake and do some reading and fishing. He once said his idea of a vacation was "not shaving and not wearing a suit."

Wendell Ford never forgot the truly important things in his life—his wife Jean, their children and grandchildren, and the simple pleasures of his native Kentucky.

Many of my colleagues will remember his trademark greeting when he walked into a room. He would say: How are all you lucky people doing? Sometimes that would be shortened to simply: Hey, Lucky!

But Wendell never lost sight that he was truly the lucky one for receiving the trust of the people of Kentucky many times over. He would be the first to tell you that, and Kentucky and our Nation are lucky as well for having had his many years of service.

Over the next 6 years, as I work my hardest to better the lives of everyone in Kentucky and the country, I am going to remember the lessons learned from Wendell Ford's long career. I will remember how his life is a testament to the success anybody in America can attain, even a country boy from Yellow Creek. I will remember what an honor it is to continue in the tradition of Wendell Ford and so many other fine public servants who have come from the Commonwealth of Kentucky. Their service will continue to remind me every day that with energy, determination, and principle, being the Senator from Kentucky is the best job I could ever hope to have.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will now proceed to a period for the transaction of morning business for 1 hour.

The Senator from Tennessee.

TRIBUTE TO MITCH MCCONNELL

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, those who have been listening and watching for the last few minutes got one good lesson on why Senator MCCONNELL has been here for over 24 years. This is a day to honor him, but he spent virtually all of his time honoring someone else.

It is a remarkable and rare event that Senator MCCONNELL could serve longer than Wendell Ford, the man he just honored, longer than Henry Clay, longer than John Sherman Cooper, and longer than Alben Barkley. But all of us know longevity by itself is not a transcending virtue, but it is an indication of one of the most transcending virtues; and that is, the people of Kentucky for the last 24 years have seen something special in MITCH MCCONNELL, something that is good for Kentucky, in the opinion of Kentuckians, and something that is good for our country. I have seen that, too, but for a longer period of time than 24 years; 40 years, to be exact.

I remember when MITCH MCCONNELL came to Washington, not the time he was an intern but as the legislative director for Senator Marlow Cook. Legislative director is a little bit of a puffed-up title for the job at that time, because in the office of Senator Baker of Tennessee, where I had been the year before, there was only one legislative assistant. So we were legislative directors of usually one or two people at a time, which may seem pretty hard for staff members in this Senate to understand.

I remember that by 1969, I moved over to work for Bryce Harlow in the Nixon White House. Howard Baker, who had been a good friend of Marlow Cook, the new Senator from Kentucky, came to me and said: Marlow Cook has a bright young man working for him; you ought to get to know him.

So I did, 40 years ago.

We both stayed in Washington for a while. We both went home after a few years, and in 1978, 30 years ago, we both were elected to an executive position in our home States—I as Governor of Tennessee, and MITCH MCCONNELL as the county executive of Jefferson County, which is Louisville, the big county there.

Then, in 1984, as the record shows and we all know, he was elected to the U.S. Senate, the only Republican in the country that year, I believe, who was able to defeat an incumbent Democrat.

When Senator MCCONNELL and I were young staff assistants in the Senate, the leaders of the Senate were Senators Dirksen and Mansfield. There have been many great leaders of the Senate since that period of time. All of those leaders who were good—and most of them were—knew this body, knew the Senate. They knew human nature instinctively, but they had one other quality, and this is another quality

Senator MCCONNELL has. They had great respect for our country.

Last July, I brought onto the Senate floor a group of teachers of U.S. history. They were selected, one from each State, under a program that is called Presidential Academies for Teachers of United States History. Since a Senator may bring onto the floor before it convenes anybody he chooses, there were 50 of us here. I showed them Daniel Webster's desk, which is right next to me. I talked with them about Henry Clay, and I showed them Jefferson Davis's desk in the back.

As you can imagine, these outstanding teachers were awestruck being on the floor of the Senate. They were the only ones here. After about a 30-minute visit, one of them—I think it was the teacher from Oregon—said to me: Senator ALEXANDER, what would you like for us to take back to our students about this visit?

I found myself saying: I hope you will tell them that I get up every morning—and I think most of us here do—and come to work hoping that by the end of the day, we can make this country a little better place. I am not sure what it looks like on television. I am not sure what it looks like on the front pages of the newspapers. But that is my motive, and that is the motive of most of us here.

That has been the motive of Senator MITCH MCCONNELL of Kentucky. Yes, beginning his 25th year in the Senate is a rare distinction, especially because he is from a State that has produced so many outstanding Senators and a State that even today and through most of the last 24 years has been a very competitive State with Democrats and Republicans both having a chance to be elected. MITCH MCCONNELL gets up every day, comes into work—and it is usually very early—thinking about how to make this country a little better before the end of the day—and that is usually very late. That quality is even more important than his more than 24 years of service.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I thank my dear friend from Tennessee for being on the Senate floor today and for his overly kind comments about my tenure. We have indeed been friends for 40 years.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Wyoming.

Mr. BARRASSO. Mr. President, it is a privilege today, and really a joy, to rise to join in the celebration of Senator MITCH MCCONNELL and his many terrific years of service to this country and to the people of the State of Kentucky. For those folks who watch from the gallery or watch at home, I will tell you what you see is what you get. He is kind, he is thoughtful, he is calm, he is patient, but I will also tell you he is persistent. You could not have a bet-

ter friend in the Senate or in this life than MITCH MCCONNELL or his wonderful wife Elaine.

We have heard a bit about the history of Kentucky, we have heard a bit about Wendell Ford, but when you put this into historical perspective and you do the searches and you see who the top names are in Kentucky when it comes to politics, the names that come up are Henry Clay, Abraham Lincoln—because he was born in Kentucky—and MITCH MCCONNELL.

Now, Henry Clay was the greatest of the Old Senate Chamber. People who watched the swearing in of the Senators earlier this month saw Senators taking their oath in this Chamber but also going back for a reenactment in the Old Senate Chamber. In that Old Senate Chamber the names were Clay, Calhoun, and Webster. When one of them would rise to speak—and people would come from all around—they would say: Clay is up, Calhoun is up, Webster is up, and people would run. Well, today, the running occurs when people say: MITCH is on the phone; MITCH is calling. You want to know: How can I help? What are his ideas? You know they are good for the country. Henry Clay was called the great compromiser. He was called the great pacifier. Those names were given to him because of his ability to bring others to agreement. The exact same thing can be said of MITCH MCCONNELL in this, the new Senate Chamber.

Now, Mr. President, we left that Old Senate Chamber in 1859 and moved to this beautiful Chamber, and this marks the 150th year of that move. There is actually a little booklet, the "United States Senate Chamber 1859–2009," and it talks about when we left and made the procession. We have heard about some previous Kentucky Senators, but the Senator who gave the speech when we left that Senate Chamber in 1859 was also from Kentucky. It was Senator John Crittenden, and some of his comments are in this booklet.

Well, I will tell you, in the new Senate Chamber, since 1859—now 150 years—MITCH MCCONNELL truly and clearly is the man of the Senate. Just like Henry Clay, he came from humble beginnings. We talk about humble beginnings, but few people know that MITCH MCCONNELL, at the age of 2, had polio. He was nursed back to health by his mother, who helped teach him how to walk and then how to run. It is through her hard work and his dedication and his persistence that he has become the man we know today.

In early November of this past year, George Will wrote an article praising Senator MCCONNELL, but he quoted Abraham Lincoln, when he wrote:

I hope to have God on my side but I must have Kentucky.

I will tell you, Mr. President, for those of us on this side of the aisle, we must have MITCH MCCONNELL. The Senate would just not be the Senate. We have been blessed time after time after time that the people of Kentucky have

seen fit to send MITCH MCCONNELL back to the Senate.

In his speech when the Senate moved from the Old Senate Chamber to the new Senate Chamber, Senator Crittenden said:

Senators are the representatives of the States of this mighty union. No matter under what sky we may sit; no matter what dome may cover us; the great patriotic spirit of the Senate of the United States will be there and I have an abiding confidence that it will never fail in the performance of its duty.

Well, Mr. President, this applies to Senator MCCONNELL because his great patriotic spirit will always be here, and those who know him have an abiding confidence that he will never fail in the performance of his duty.

Mr. President, Senator MCCONNELL is a champion. He is a champion for Kentucky and he is a champion for America; for a stronger America, a better America, a safer America, and an America where any boy or girl can, through hard work and persistence, grow up to be a leader of this great Nation.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Republican leader is recognized.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I would like to express my deep appreciation to the Senator from Wyoming for his overly kind and very generous comments about my work here, and also say, Mr. President, to the people of Wyoming, how fortunate they are to have Senator BARRASSO representing them.

I have seen a lot of new Senators come into this body over these 25 years. I have never seen one make a mark quicker. So I know the people of Wyoming deeply appreciate their junior Senator. They demonstrated that a couple of months ago in the election, and they really could not have made a wiser choice. I value my colleague from Wyoming, and I thank him so much for his very kind and generous remarks.

I yield the floor, and I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask I be recognized as in morning business for such time as I shall consume.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Without objection, it is so ordered. The Senator from Oklahoma is recognized.

TARP

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I was somewhat shocked last October when